

Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church, Newtownabbey

(Trinity Congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland)

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Number : NIC 106535

The Trustees present the annual report and financial statements for Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church, Newtownabbey for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: Trinity Congregation of The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (otherwise referred to as "Trinity RP Church, Newtownabbey")

Year of constitution : 1896 (relocated to current site in 1983)

Charity Registration Number: NIC 106535

Contact Address: 560 Doagh Road, Mossley, Newtownabbey BT36 5BU

Correspondence Address: c/o K.J.Nelson, Clerk of Session, 560 Doagh Road, Mossley, Newtownabbey BT36 5BU

Charity Trustees

J A Donnelly

R S Drennan

G A Gillespie

W O Graham

J K McKelvey

K J Nelson

R S Wilson

Principal Office-bearers :

Clerk of Session: K J Nelson

Treasurer: S Gamble

Independent Examiner : JAS Campbell & Company, 49 Managher Rd, Aghadowey, Coleraine BT51 4DE

Bankers : Danske Bank, 18 The Square, Ballyclare BT39 9BB

Structure, Governance and Management**The Session**

The government of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland is vested in the following courts in ascending order of precedence ; Session , Presbytery and Synod.

The charity trustees of the congregation are the members of its Session. Under the congregation's governing document, The Code (the book of government and order of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland) the Session seeks to watch over and promote the spiritual interests of the congregation and of persons not connected with any congregation who are within its bounds. It ensures pastoral care is in place in the congregation and seeks to further the contribution of the congregation to Christian witness and service in the local community.

The Session has delegated to its Board of Deacons the temporal affairs of the congregation including administering all funds and property belonging to the congregation. Members of the Session are ex-officio members of the Board of Deacons.

The Session consists of the ordained minister and the ruling elders of the congregation. The minister of the congregation presides in the Session, and is called the Moderator. In the absence of the Moderator, any other minister of the Church, if deputed by him may preside.

Stated meetings of Session are publicly announced to the congregation and are constituted as a Court of the Church.

The Moderator is responsible to declare the Court constituted, dissolved or adjourned.

The Moderator and two other members of Session constitute a quorum.

All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator has the casting vote. To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant at its ordinances. The selection of those proposed to be called to the office can be either by the congregation or by the Session.

Stated meetings of the Session are usually held at least 9 times in each year.

All stated meetings of Session are minuted, with minutes approved and signed by the Moderator and Clerk of Session at succeeding meetings and duly recorded in the Session Minute Book.

Session minute books are inspected annually by the Presbytery.

Trustees do not receive remuneration, reward or other private benefit for carrying out their Trustee responsibility.

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The Session ensures that there is an Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is usually held in January, announced in advance and open to all members and adherents.

Activity reports and audited financial reports from the Session, Deacons and other church organisations are published in advance of the AGM to all members. This facilitates discussion at the AGM where the reports and accounts are received and approved.

The Session Report and audited accounts are then submitted to the Presbytery where they are reviewed.

The Presbytery then publishes an annual report with information and audited accounts from all congregations within its bounds.

Presbytery

Under the Code of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland form of governance the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which superintends generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Trinity congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Eastern Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. The members of the Presbytery consists mainly of the active ministers of congregations assigned to it by the Presbytery, ministers who have retired from active duty, ministers without charge, ordained missionaries whose credentials are with the Presbytery and an elder appointed by the Session of each congregation.

The Synod

The Synod is the supreme court of the Church, representing in one body the whole Church and acting as its supreme legislative, administration and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it. The Synod is normally constituted during the second week in June for worship and to conduct its business. At the end of business it is dissolved. The membership of the Synod consists mainly of the active ministers of each congregation and a representative elder appointed by the Session of each congregation.

Description and Purpose

The charitable purpose of the congregation is the advancement of religion, specifically the Biblical Christian faith.

Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church, Newtownabbey is a congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, as a Reformed Church within the wider body of Christ is grounded in the Scriptures, and exists to worship, love and honour God through faith in His Son and by the power of His Spirit, and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to the world. As a congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme authority over all we do.

The regular holding of public worship is the congregation's principal activity.

We also view our fellowship as a missional community, whose aim is to serve and reach those who have yet to come to faith and to be part of God's ongoing work of renewing and recreating His world.

Objectives & Activities

The congregation usually meets for worship twice every Sabbath (Sunday) and everyone is welcome, whether members of the congregation or not.

Public worship is advertised via the Presbytery and Synodical directories and publications; congregational signage, website, social media and distribution of literature within the local community. On various occasions public worship and other church meetings are advertised in local and regional newspapers.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is usually observed on 6 occasions during the year.

In addition to meeting together for worship, fellowship and service, members are encouraged to actively reach out in friendship to those who are not yet believers and to engage in various approaches to spiritually and practically benefit the local community.

The congregation usually holds regular bible study, prayer and fellowship meetings and has a wide range of organisations which are available to the congregation and local community including:

- Sabbath (Sunday) School
- Covenanter Youth (Youth Fellowship)
- Tots Group
- Badminton Group
- Seniors Fellowship
- Men's Fellowship events
- Women's' Fellowship events

Achievements

What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?' (Psalm 116: 5 & 12)

On a significant day of Covenant Renewal for our congregation in November 2022, Prof Peel preached 'An Exhortation to Covenant Loyalty' from Psalm 116. We were reminded of how our covenant God deals with us in limitless grace and mercy. We were exhorted to respond with loving obedience as He brings us through the wilderness of life toward the promised land of the new heavens and the new earth.

As we reflect on the year just past, we can reflect on God's goodness in a multitude of ways as we remember with thankfulness those who have reached the promised land.

The pulpit ministry of Prof Peel and other men greatly encouraged and challenged us from God's Word. Mr Paul Wallace completed his six-month internship with us in February before taking up the pastorate of the Bready congregation.

Mr Jonny Fitzsimons spent part of his student placement in Trinity involved in preaching and pastoral work.

Rev Yusuke Hirata from the Japanese RP church, along with his wife and their sons, continued to worship and serve in the congregation. As well as leading in the Adult Bible Class, Rev. Hirata preached on different occasions including a communion series.

Sermon series were preached from Exodus, Proverbs, Haggai, Psalms 8 to 14 and 2 Peter.

Throughout the year, the preaching also included sermons from Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Malachi, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Romans, 1& 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, 1 Peter and Revelation. A number of monthly guest services were based on 'Who is Jesus?', focussed on the Gospels.

Prof Peel has fulfilled his denominational responsibilities as Professor of New Testament at the Reformed Theological College, as well as acting as Interim Moderator of the Carrickfergus Session. He also served as a Trustee of the Banner of Truth, taught at Cornhill Belfast and spoke at conferences in South Africa and Singapore.

Those who have struggled with illness and bodily weakness as well as those who have experienced painful bereavements continued to be upheld in prayer.

Throughout the year worship services continued to be live-streamed through the Trinity YouTube channel. This continued to be a blessing to the housebound within the congregation as well as others who viewed locally, nationally and internationally.

The dedicated work of the Ministry Team in a variety of ways including broadcasts inside and outside the buildings was a tremendous asset to congregational life - we are indebted to everyone involved.

Five communion seasons were held during the year with an average of c.85 communicants.

The church programme included mid-week missionary meetings and a return to Home Fellowship Groups and Home Psalm Singing. Sabbath evening prayer meetings were held twice per month.

The Conference Committee organised a very enjoyable and edifying congregational weekend conference in October on the theme of 'The Holy Spirit'

A men's walking group was well established and a congregational agent appointed for the Evangelical Times (ET), with an encouraging uptake in subscriptions.

The first Holiday Bible Club (HBC) since 2019 was held with an encouraging attendance of children.

As well as providing an outreach opportunity to the local community, the HBC was well supported by the congregation, helping to develop gifts and a spirit of unity as all ages working effectively together.

Badminton and Trinity Tots continue to provide valuable opportunities for fellowship and outreach.

The Court of Session was constituted 15 times and Session business meetings commenced with prayer times for the congregation.

The congregation was represented at Presbytery and Synod by Prof Peel and delegated elders.

Two joint meetings were held with the Board of Deacons to help co-ordinate church planning and discuss various matters impacting the congregation.

After congregational briefings in Trinity and Carrickfergus, congregational meetings were arranged as each congregation agreed to make a call to Mr Paul Wallace as a Co-Pastor.

The call was declined as Mr Wallace was guided to accept the call of the Bready congregation.

The process to issue a joint call was harmonious as well as strengthening the relationship between Trinity and Carrickfergus congregations.

The Session is deeply appreciative for and commends everyone who served diligently in many areas of work and witness during 2022, including the Sabbath School , CY groups, WF, Trinity Tots and Board of Deacons.

As we recall with thankfulness how our covenant God's limitless grace and mercy, may we all respond with loving obedience on our journey to the new heavens and the new earth.

At 31 December 2022 there were 102 communicant members and 53 families connected with the congregation. The congregation was served by 9 Elders and 9 Deacons.

The average weekly attendance at morning worship during 2022 was estimated at around 120 and 93 at the evening services.

The average attendance at mid-week meetings was c.55 and there were 9 Sabbath School teachers and 55 pupils, with 32 young people regularly in attendance at Covenanter Youth meetings.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by the minister and/or one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church. During the year most Presbytery meetings took place by Zoom due to the pandemic.

Synod

The minister and one of the elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

Property

Under the oversight of the Deacons, and with the support of the congregation, the congregation's buildings are maintained and cleaned throughout the year with both planned and remedial work undertaken as necessary.

The Deacons ensure there are appropriate insurances in place for the buildings and all relevant legislative and statutory requirements are complied with.

Public Benefit Statement

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland meets the public benefit requirement by providing benefit to its members and the general public by making known the Christian Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the advancement of religion, specifically the Biblical Christian faith.

The direct benefits which flow from the purposes of the Church include the gaining of an understanding in Christian beliefs as set out in the Bible and in the Church's subordinate standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms) and the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony leading to spiritual and moral development and opportunities for response to Bible teaching. In turn, this framework leads to practical expressions of Christian beliefs and standards in the local community such as through the care of those in need including the sick and bereaved.

Generally the above benefits are delivered locally by congregations and their members, or are facilitated through Presbytery or by the Synod through Synodical committees and funds.

Public access is made known through the use of church noticeboards, printed material, press advertisements, website, and social media or in other ways, particularly 'word of mouth'.

The benefits are demonstrated on an ongoing basis through responses to the services during pastoral work and informal ad-hoc feedback from members, their families, and members of the public.

The purpose does not lead to harm. The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to Ministers, Mission workers and others who may receive benefits as a result of their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental and necessary in order to further our charitable purpose. There are no other private benefits. The beneficiaries of this purpose are members, their families, other individuals that the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland is in direct and indirect contact with. This includes the community in which pastoral services are provided and other communities throughout Northern Ireland, and worldwide which benefit from our engagement with and support for both Christian and other organisations, charities and individuals in need.

The Session has had regard to the Charity Commissions Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

Financial Review

Session records its thanks to the members of the Board of Deacons and in particular the congregational treasurer for their diligence in dealing with the financial affairs of the congregation.

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offerings and other collections. As a result of the Covid19 situation most contributors switched to giving by electronic bank transfer for most of the year.

The total income for 2022 amounted to £199,099_a reduction_of £ 4,219_over 2021. Expenditure totalled £208,860.

During 2022, £43,950 was provided for Synodical work, missions and other Christian activity.

During 2022 the congregation's giving to Christian work worldwide (inclusive of the above figure of £43,950) amounted to £92,545.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees' policy is to retain a level of free reserves or general reserves which matches its needs at the current time and in the foreseeable future. Free reserves are those unrestricted reserves not invested in fixed assets, which are available for general use.

The main reason for holding reserves is to ensure that the charity has enough resources to fund its programmes and to hold sufficient resources to meet its commitments. The Trustees believe that our reserves policy is both responsible and prudent, but have not specified a particular level of reserves to be held.

At 31 December 2022 the charity held unrestricted funds of £452,956_in terms of cash and deposit accounts representing almost 26 months' expenditure which is in line with what is regarded as an appropriate level, bearing in mind there is a future need for expenditure on refurbishment of the congregation's buildings.

No endowment funds are held by the charity.

Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

There are no funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements of the congregation in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice.

As the congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

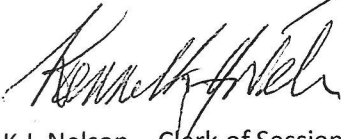
The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires charity trustees to ensure that accounting records are kept which are sufficient to show and explain all the charity's transactions, which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable them to prepare statement of accounts which complies with regulation under the Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

Approved by the Session at a meeting on 21st September 2023 and signed on its behalf by :

S Wilson



K J Nelson – Clerk of Session

21st September 2023